

Property-1901.

The Freedmen and Their Sons

By Prof. W. E. Burghardt Du Bois

THE State School Commissioner of Georgia in a lecture in Philadelphia last year stated that most of day are either those emancipated in their youth and trained in freedom, or the sons of freedmen. Theirs then is the credit of this remarkable showing.

the negro property of that State was "owned by older people, ex-slaves," and that "the most of this property was accumulated during the first twenty years after the war, and very little added to it in the last ten years." The same statement has been repeated elsewhere until many believe it substantially true.

Moreover, such figures tell but part of the whole story. As a Chattanooga paper suggests, this \$15,629,811 under the Georgia system of assessment may easily represent \$30,000,000 of real value. To this also may be added ten millions of exemptions, so that it is not mere guesswork when it is asserted that the tax re-

The figures that gave semblance of turns of 1901 indicate that the Black truth to this view were those relating to Georgian controls perhaps forty millions the accumulations of property during the of property dug out of red clay in a single period of financial depression following generation.

the year 1892. The negroes of Georgia ATLANTA UNIVERSITY.

owned \$14,960,675 worth of property in 1893, but the value of this property rapidly fell to less than thirteen millions in 1895, rising afterward to fourteen millions in 1900. Those who saw in this a proof of increasing shiftlessness among the younger negroes overlooked the fact that white property values fell off \$50,000,000 in nearly the same period. While then we who watched with sympathetic anxiety the struggles of these black folks to save something out of their meager incomes were convinced that it was the financial depression and not the laziness of the young which had reduced negro property, still the fact remained that the negroes owned a little less in 1900 than in 1895.

The report of the State Comptroller for 1901, however, puts all doubt aside. He reports:

Assessed value of total negro property,	1900,	\$14,118,72.
" " " " "	1901,	15,629,811

In a single year the black people of Georgia have saved \$1,500,000 worth of taxable property. This total is nearly \$700,000 more than the negroes ever owned during the height of their prosperity early in the nineties. Further, the report says:

Acres of land owned by negroes,	1900	1,675,073 acres.
" " " "	1901	1,141,135 "
Value of " " " "	1900	\$4,271,544
" " " "	1901	4,656,042

Since last year 66,000 acres have been purchased and \$380,000 added to the value of farm lands. Moreover, this increase of property shows that the young men are at work. The freedmen of 1864 who had been trained to manhood under the slave régime are to-day old men past working period. The workers of to-